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# THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

FEBRUARY 1, 1868.

## THE MUSIC OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

By G. A. MACFARREN.

(Concluded from p. 249.)

YET two remarks upon the vicious system of allying religious hymns to tunes already married to secular words, that lawlessness in art which demoralises the sacred poem while it exalts not the character of the laical music.

Firstly: the doubtful merit of originating this too popular practice, belongs not to Rowland Hill of the Tabernacle; belongs not to Martin Madan of the Lock Chapel; belongs not to Thomas Sternhold of Henry the VIII.'s privy chamber; nor belongs to his French prototype, Clement Marot, of Henry the II.'s licentious court. Richard de Ledrede, Bishop of Ossory, in the fourteenth century, wrote Latin hymns to popular song tunes; the Monks of Reading, in the reign of our Henry III., sang a Latin hymn to the six men's song of the people, "Sumer is icumen in;" and Thomas, Archbishop of York, in the time of William the Conqueror, made it a rule to adapt Latin devotional words to every minstrel's tune in current esteem. A practice that was bad when it was new, lost none of its evil in growing old, but became worse and worse when, in later times, the subjects proper to the tunes were of a more secular, since more personal, nature than formerly; and men who had not the doubtful talent to originate this mischief, should have exercised the certain prudence of profiting by experience in its avoidance.

Secondly: the great merits in a tune, of expressing the sentiment and declaiming the words to which it is set, are entirely frustrated when the tune is falsely appropriated to verses of other sentiment and syllables, of other emphasis than those for which it was composed; and this objection holds as strongly against the heterogeneous assortment of hymns with tunes that have nothing in common besides their metrical arrangement, though the tunes be never associated with other than hymnical verses, as against the illegitimate sealing of the sacred to the secular elements; the evil may differ in degree but not in kind, and if less an evil, is only so because there is not so much of it.

Very much might be said upon the structure of the hymn tune; as to the impressive effect of the old English, in accordance with the constant Lutheran manner, of pausing at the close of each line of the stanza; and as to the signal distinction of character between the tunes imported and composed in the first days of the Reformation, those written in the hundred years prior to the last twenty or thirty, and those produced by the present generation,—a distinction resultant from the first having been constructed either for unisonous performance, or with regard to the rules of the strict counterpoint of which they were the basis, and from the others having been composed with various reference to the widely different styles of harmony prevalent during the last century and in use in our own day. Much might be said, also, on the unfitness for its

purpose of a large portion, comprising many of the most beautiful specimens of poetry, of our English hymnology,—its purpose being that the several stanzas of a poem should be sung to repetitions of the same music; as to the variation, not only of sentiment, from stanza to stanza, but of accentuation and punctuation, to the extent of inducing false prosody and even false sense; of which last the following example is the more glaring because of the great merit, apart from its purpose as a hymn, of the poem wherein it occurs. In John Francis Lyte's admirable hymn, "Abide with me," any correct declamation of the line—

"Help of the helpless—O abide with me,"

must compel this nonsensical reading of the corresponding line in a subsequent stanza,

"O thou that changest—not abide with me,"

instead of the truthful rendering that could never be sung to the same melody,

"O thou that changest not, abide with me."

Want of space, however, that inexorable exigency of journalism, necessitates postponement of further commentary on these ramifications of the subject, until, if ever, I may venture to resume the discussion of Church Music.

The Anthem claims next consideration.

It is for scholars to decide the debated etymology of the word which defines this class of composition, a word that is even more peculiar to our language, than is the class of composition it defines peculiar to our country. I will presume, however, to own that the Rev. J. Powell Metcalfe's view of "anti thema," as the source of the term, seems to me to denote, better than any other I have heard, its original application. This accords with "motet," from "motettus," which at first signified a moving part or counterpoint upon the Plain Song or Cantus Firmus; it being a Greek derivative to the same purport. The Song, or Cantus, or Theme, was probably in the Latin Church a Gregorian, or long accepted melody. There can be little question, or none, that the Anthems, of which the text is comprised, and the performance prescribed in Henry VIII.'s Primer, may have been elaborations of such themes; any more than there can be question that the non-scriptural verses, of which they are composed, may have been translations of Latin hymns. "Anthems, or little things in metre," is the definition in Queen Elizabeth's injunction, wherein the use is sanctioned of this species of composition, in place of the Hymn, the inclusion of which in the Church Service had already been permitted. The surmise appears to be more than plausible, that, previously to this injunction, hymns were sung by congregations in unison without harmony, and the term "Anthem," was used to imply the same hymns to the same tunes, with the addition of harmony, or counterpoint, or moving parts against the tune or theme, and thus "anti thema."

I presume to cling to this derivation of the term, because it is very clearly appropriate to the sense in which it is applied to some of the earliest extant pieces that are defined as Anthems; some of these having metrical, and many having non-scriptural texts. Judging from these, and from the warrant for their use, brevity and simplicity in the composition of the Anthem were obviously enjoined; while there was no direction nor even hint given for the choice of the texts of Anthems from Scriptural sources. Hence, may be strongly argued that there are two

infractions of the original intention in the prevalent practice as to the constitution of the Anthem.

One of these is more curious than important; it is, that musicians, seemingly from the time of the Restoration, have been restricted, either by their own supposition or by persons in authority over them, to Biblical texts for the words of Anthems. This is curious, because the contrary is the case in the words of Anthems in King Henry's Primer, the contrary is implied in Queen Elizabeth's injunction, and the contrary is exemplified in the earliest Anthems; and because, in the now too frequent mis-appropriation of pieces from oratorios and other non-ecclesiastical works to anthem use, no such restriction is observed. It is however, unimportant, because no better texts can elsewhere be found than in the Bible, and to have good texts for anthems is the only if not, as practice implies, the imperative desideratum.

The other infraction of the intention of the Church, as this is plainly set forth in Queen Elizabeth's injunction, is the modern expansion of the "little things in metre" into long, complicated compositions. It is just, that the appliance of art resources to Church use should be commensurate with the development of those resources; and hence, in some cases, that a larger and more comprehensive design should be employed in ecclesiastical composition in the days of Victoria, than was possible in those of Elizabeth. These cases are, however, in the setting of the Service,—those portions of the same, of which I have spoken as invariable,—whose utmost aggrandisement is suggested, nay required, by the nature of the texts, and by their prominent position in the daily ceremonial. The magnitude of the setting of the Service has, indisputably, three limitations,—the occasion whether of feast or of fast, or of ordinary celebration, the capabilities of the choir, and the powers of the composer; none other than these can I perceive, nor will I respect. A setting of the *Te Deum* for a festival should be the grandest work its composer is able to produce; Handel's is not too long, nothing can ever be too profound, too highly imagined, or too deeply wrought; and the treatment of the other pieces should be of a parity with this. The anthem, on the contrary, save on rarely exceptional occasions, ought to be brief, concise, clear in its phrasing, and simple in its construction. Let me revert to what was before advanced to this same effect, and declare that it is not for want of arguments, but of space for their discussion, that I do not here greatly enlarge on this most careful opinion. I admit, as in another instance, that my practice has sometimes been against my principle; to tell others to "do as I say, and not as I do," has been the acknowledged privilege of men of a higher calling than mine, since time immemorial; and I trust for its concession to me in cases where choice was not left to myself.

If the false balance between Services and Anthems be ever adjusted; if the foolish complaint be ever silenced against long Services (which ought to be long) as precluding long Anthems (which ought to be short); there is then another deep-rooted, though lesser impropriety in the structure of Anthems, which next demands reform. This is the designing such compositions for solo-performance, which induces the kindred impropriety of allowing their performance by solo-singers. "Verse Anthems," as these compositions are conventionally defined, are,

from every point of view, objectionable, save only from that point which regards them as a means of attraction and gratification, to persons who go to Church to hear a concert instead of to say their prayers. The solo singer in Church music is the intoning priest, and his part is distinctly indicated in the rubric. Any other solo-singing than his is a medium for personal display, and hence an incentive to vanity in the performer, and a distraction from devoutness in the audience.

The culmination of art is its forgetfulness by those who witness its workings; to experience a great effect, to receive a strong impression, and to be unaware that it has been wrought by artistic means, is to prove these means superlative, to acknowledge the art which hides the art. Music may, under fortunate circumstances, attain to this pre-eminence in Choral performances. The same is scarcely possible in solo-singing; and such impossibility is greater in a church during the Service than in any other arena. The executant must be of excellence almost superhuman, whose individuality can be absorbed in the work he presents, and whose personality can be ignored in the effect he produces. The beauty of his voice, the propriety of its production, the merit of his style, the truth of his reading, the justice of his phrasing, the clearness of his pronunciation, and the force of his declamation; any of these, or any of their contraries, may, nay must excite the attention of any auditory, whose minds would be engaged by the effect of the music and its expression, in a piece which engaged a multitude instead of an individual. Even the appearance of a singer becomes a matter of interest when his task separates him from his fellows in the Choir, and imposes upon him all the responsibility of the moment, and singles him out for admiration and criticism. Admiration and criticism! are these the functions of an assembly of worshippers? It may be fitting to censure for good or ill the matter and the manner, the doctrine and the delivery, of a preacher; because his address is to the people, and is no part of their worship; but the singers offer their address to Heaven, and it is, or should be, the delegated utterance of the concentrated worship of the entire community with which every heart vibrated in unison.

Even from the point of view of popularity, the shallow justification that may, in by-gone times, have defended the employment of solo-singing in Church Service, upon the ground of its drawing together congregations, and pleasing them when so gathered, no longer avails, in provincial churches at least, under the vastly altered circumstances of the present day. Once upon a time, the educational, the remunerative, and social condition of Cathedral choristers was widely different from what it is now; and their average ability to fulfil the great requirements of solo-performance must have been higher in proportion. Later than this, when the vicars choral were already degraded from the emolument and esteem wherewith they were dignified in the Cathedral staff, these were by very far the best, if not, the only singers that could be heard in country towns remote from the metropolis. The standard of general musical knowledge, moreover, was then much lower than at present; and congregations who knew no better, and could conceive nothing superior, might well be, as they naturally were, gratified and accordingly attracted by the performances then pre-

sented to them. Now a-days, however, in consequence of the increased facilities of transit, and the advantage taken of these by provincial societies and metropolitan speculators, the best singers of our own country, and of every other country in and out of Europe, appear from time to time in all the towns of England; and audiences who witness their performances are thus made familiar with their merits. General culture, also, which strengthens the power of appreciation, has been more and more musically directed within recent times than during the preceding period. Thus, precept and example combine to raise the taste and improve the judgment of our country congregations; and where, two generations back, people were satisfied, nay, delighted with the solo-performances of the local choristers, the descendants of the same people have a different standard of excellence, and can be ill satisfied, certainly not delighted, with exhibitions that may have thrown their grandfathers into raptures. To hear an anonymous singer, whose talent was as little developed as it was little known beyond his immediate locality, was one thing, when he was the only singer that could be heard, and the hearers had no knowledge of music; to hear such a singer, is a completely different thing, when his singing may be compared with the yesterday's performance of the best living artists, by hearers whose education tends to qualify them to discriminate between such various grades of merit. It is not, further, to be overlooked, that the practice of choral singing, wherein the executant cannot listen to the niceties of his own performance, strongly tends to unfit even the most delicately organised and judiciously trained for singing alone; since the habit of merging his individuality in a general effect, is likely, if not certain, to disable him from asserting this upon occasions, if such habit nullify not individuality altogether. Hence, if solo-singing in church be continued, the only reasonable chance of rendering it gratifying and attractive, seems to be, as was suggested earlier in these papers, to engage artists for this purpose, distinct from, and in addition to the chorus—a plan scarcely compatible with the usual course of Cathedral economy.

In this matter, as in that of the misappropriation of sacred words to the tunes of dances and secular songs, I am quite aware that there is the strength of a wide predilection with the authority of long prevailing use against my views. In the one case, however, as in the other, I could cite, in their support, the opinions of churchmen whom all must respect as heartily as I do. Whatever the merit of the music, I cannot feel that the best thing Orlando Gibbons did for the Church, was to compose his solo Anthem, "This is the record of John;" nor that John Weldon served religion, or art, or his own reputation so much, in the composition of his anthems for an alto voice, as he served the memory of the singer for whom they were written. Antiquity honours a good practice, but a practice that is evil should gather from long use contempt rather than respect; since what is venial in youth, becomes cardinal when the lessons have been rejected of long experience. It were vain to pretend that beauty was more obtainable in choral than in solo music; but there can be no denial, that the qualities of grandeur, solemnity, and even sublimity, are more natural to the former, and more easily approached by one who attempts its composition, than to the realm of art in which the

personality of the individual executant bears more strongly than the intrinsic worth of the music, upon the effect the music produces.

It is now to protest, and that most vehemently, against the custom of appropriating as anthems selections from larger works that never were designed for such a purpose.

Worst among these, that have come within my knowledge, are some movements from instrumental compositions, which have been more or less distorted to render their vocalization possible, and to misfit them to the texts which are desecrated by the unholy alliance. Be it an overture of Arne, be it a quartet of Haydn, be it a trio of Beethoven, the fact is the same, of injustice to the music, profanation of the words, distraction of the hearer's thoughts from the place of worship to the theatre or the concert-room, and sacrilege of the temple.

Next to be deprecated, is the association of pieces from Masses, and other compositions to Latin words, with English texts of purport and sentiment different from the original. The case is quite otherwise with literal translations or close imitations of the Latin sense; in these we have a lesson on the catholicity of those tenets which are common to the Roman and the English Church, and the latter becomes illuminated by master-thoughts that were conceived for the service of the former, but aggrandize both by explaining and enforcing their points of unity. I have already quoted a clerical impression of the powerful annotation upon the text, embodied in the setting of the Credo in Beethoven's Mass in C; every auditor may not be so sensitive as he I quoted, to the deep significance of this great commentary on the Christian's belief; but every one may, in some degree, be helped by Beethoven's music to the just comprehension of the text, and all the more so for his own language being employed for its enunciation. If, however, the same notes were to be twisted round any chapter of David's Psalms or Jeremiah's Lamentations that had syllables enough to sustain them, the sound and the sense would be in antagonism, truth of expression would be annihilated by their explosion, and such abuse of art would have tendencies as evil as its proper application is good. Yet this very thing, this fraud upon the musician and upon his audience, has been practised with movements from Mozart's Masses and other works of the kind; and some of the pieces so despoiled of their expression, which is their chief element of merit, are even now in the working repertory of some of our Cathedrals.

Least objectionable—but, ah! how very objectionable in this least degree—of these usurpations for the Church, of music not designed for its use, is the appropriation of pieces from Oratorios to the purpose of Anthems. Now, in the first place, the effect of these pieces is materially injured by the omission of the parts written for the orchestra, which are as integral to the whole as those written for the voices, and are at best misrepresented by any arrangement of them for the organ. Again, it is seriously injured by the enormous disparity between the number of singers in a Church Choir and the number we are accustomed to hear in Oratorio performances, even performances on the smallest scale that are ever brought before the public; since this disparity provokes comparison of what we hear and what we have heard, and the character of the music is changed accordingly. The indiscretion, from the attractive and

gratifying point of view, of extracting pieces for solo voices, can scarcely be questioned, since it brings into immediate comparison the rendering of the self-same music by provincial choristers, with that by the most perfect singers in the country, which is now to be heard from time to time, in every quarter of the kingdom. Yet again, the effect of these pieces is injured by their severance from the context, as much as a single figure would be, were it cut out of a group in a picture, or a single sentence were it cut out of an argument in a book; and the effect is never enhanced by their unwonted surroundings in the Church Service. An exception, I think a sole exception, from the general impropriety of this practice, may stand in favour of the Hallelujah Chorus in Handel's *Messiah*; and this one particular piece is so unique in its merit, so unique in its popularity, so unique in its certainty of efficient performance, and so unique in its impression on all who hear it wherever and whenever it is performed, that it indisputably excepts itself from rules which are applicable to all the rest of music.

Belonging to the same category of musical malversation, and utterly indefensible, is the practice of coupling together two pieces, perhaps from different works, perhaps from remote portions of the same, perhaps in different keys, perhaps in the same; and so violating the coherence of the words, the connection of the musical ideas, the propriety of tonal relationship, and all the intentions of the composer. The copulation of a song from *St. Paul*, with a choral from the "Hymn of Praise," and of a song in A flat, with a quartet in B flat from *Elijah*, are instances of this preposterous practice, that are in use in many cathedrals.

There remains to speak of the Oratorio; not generally, as a class of sacred composition; but specially, as a class proper to the Church, though its admission within the consecrated edifice is matter of objection to many persons whose motives are more to be revered than their arguments accepted.

To do justice to this branch of the subject, to do justice even to my views respecting it, would need far greater space for its discussion than I will presume to occupy, and a writer of a vastly different stamp from mine to discuss it. Let me, however, set forth some of the roots of arguments in support of Oratorios in churches, and leave these to develop and fructify in the thoughts of anyone who may give them consideration.

The very word which defines the class of composition, Oratorio, records its origin. Still, though S. Filippo Neri drew multitudes to his Oratory meetings by the attraction of his musical performances, for which he engaged the greatest productive and executive artists in Rome; though the class of works to which he gave rise shortly divided itself into what are recognised as the ecclesiastical and dramatic forms, and both of these forms were for very long restricted to Church use; and though the application of the definition to the class, which was not until many years after Neri's time, referred directly to his institution, and generally to the portion of a church wherein Oratorios were performed; the true foundation of these musical illustrations of sacred history and sacred doctrine, lies far deeper in antiquity than the Reformation or even the corruption of the Roman Church. The annual recitation, during Holy Week, of the incidents of the Passion, is at the present time an important feature of the

seasonal celebration at St. Peter's, of which, in his letter to Zelter,\* Mendelssohn gives an account as interesting as it is minute. This performance has been repeated yearly since a very primitive period, and the very music that is sung, as much as the forms of its distribution, has been preserved from century to century. Luther deemed this periodical rehearsal of the sacred story so eminently catholic, so universally necessary in the Christian Church, and so distinct from those abuses which needed reform, that he continued to use the Latin version of the text, rather than make any innovation upon a custom which had commanded men's reverence, and nurtured their holy affections for many ages. As Latinity passed more and more out of use in the Lutheran Church, the successors of the founder substituted various German versions of the story for the vulgate, and took the utmost advantage of the progress of musical art to add from its resources to the interest of the recitation. Hence, the many musical settings of the Passion, all of which were designed for ecclesiastical use, all were performed in the churches in the week before Easter, and of which the most notable are those by Schütz, Sabastiani, Keiser, Handel, and Bach. Hence, also, the composition of other German oratorios, such as *Graun's Tod Jesu*, expressly for Church performance. In England, on the contrary, the first public presentation of oratorios was unquestionably in a theatre; but then, Handel found it necessary to meet the natural prejudice of the time, with what can only be interpreted as an apology for the introduction of a work upon a sacred subject in a secular building. His *Messiah*, the subject of which, is the most sacred of all, was unsuccessful when produced in his Lenten course of Oratorios at Covent Garden; nor was it received by the public, until it was reproduced at the Foundling Chapel, when the medium of the Church seemed to be a fit channel for the introduction to the world of a work of such peculiarly religious character; the Oratorio, so sanctioned, was accepted with welcome, and, with this virtual licence, it has since then been performed without objection in any place throughout England, excepting only in churches; but, in these the best, if not the sole fitting localities for the promulgation of sacred story, most anomalously, has its performance drawn down the invectives, even of men who would dispute the propriety of presenting such a subject in a general concert-room.

The pretended unsuitableness of string instruments to Church use is urged, I must say whimsically, as a reason against orchestral performances within consecrated walls; and this is made a ground for the exclusion of Oratorios, in which the orchestra is indispensable; they who enunciate this objection, know, far better than I, where to point to the countless passages in Holy Writ which record and enjoin the employment of string instruments, of instruments of all kinds, in Divine Service; and these passages, surely confute any such objection as completely as they anticipate it. Moreover, the objection is peculiar to England, and, even here, of the newest growth. Few of us are so young, who can give a serious thought to the matter, as not to remember the annual performance of the Dettingen *Te Deum* at St. Paul's for the Sons of the Clergy; and many of us may call to pleasant memory the admirable effect, spiritual and artistic, of the performances. Before Handel set the *Te Deum*, Purcell's setting

\* June 16th, 1831.

was given at the same yearly festival. At that time a grand orchestra was commonly engaged for Services in celebration of important occasions; then, a full band constituted part of the staff of the Chapel Royal; and there can be no question that our Church Services of an earlier period were aggrandised by the employment of viols and other instruments besides the organ. Nevertheless, the objection is raised which I here attempt to answer; nevertheless, in his music for the Duke of Wellington's funeral, Mr. Goss was prohibited the use of a complete orchestra to give effect to his ideas, and was restricted to the employment of the instruments that constitute a German street band.

The argument already adduced against the giving of excerpts from oratorios as anthems, should be a strong one for the giving of oratorios in entirety; and the public inclination for these excerpts, and the clerical disposition to indulge it, should strengthen the argument in the one direction at least, if not in both. The oratorio is a grandly extended anthem; but, on the occasions of its performance, it should constitute the entire Service.

The irreverence evinced by many of the congregation at the festival of the Parochial Schools in St. Paul's, painfully proves that the exceptionality of so grand a performance leads people to regard it rather as a matter of amusement than an act of devotion, and to make purveyance accordingly for their corporeal refreshment instead of abandoning themselves, as they would on other festal occasions, to the spiritual nourishment the Church provides. Were oratorios more frequently given in churches, and their propriety to those places less questioned, the world would regain the habit of veneration for sacred things amid sacred surroundings, and would, as of old, revere the thing the more in proportion to the pains spent, and the means brought to bear upon its presentation.

The interference with the regularity of the Daily Service is alleged as an objection to the use of the Church for an Oratorio performance. Against this, may be pleaded that the nave of a Cathedral is not the site of the Daily Service, and that, until the recent institution of the popular Sunday Evening Services it has not been used since the Reformation for any devotional purposes. Let then, in England, this unused portion of a Church be appropriated to the occasional performance of Oratorios, as in Rome and throughout Italy, was the Oratory whence their definition was derived; and the world would have opportunities of edification, which, from their present rarity have now perhaps too perverse a tendency; and grave men and sound thinkers would then, I believe, observe in the exaltation these performances would induce in popular feeling, good reason for the legitimacy of the Oratorio as an essential branch of the music of the English Church.

Here close my speculations on our Church music. I have spoken of its controllers and its executants; its composers have no official recognition, no authorised remuneration, and no standing whatever in Church esteem and the ecclesiastical establishment. I have spoken of every section of the music proper to the English Church; the Preces and Responses, the Chant, the Service, the Hymn Tune, the Anthem, and the Oratorio. If the views that have been set forth be sometimes new, they may the better stir the thoughts of abler men than myself to do them justice; if their expression be unsatisfactory, I trust

that this may be imputed rather to want of writer-ship than to want of reverence. If in these remarks, inorthodox application have occurred of a doctrinal term; if craftsmen and those of other professions than music have been treated with different respect from educated artists; if in such indiscretions there have been the false appearance of ill feeling, I regret this as much for myself as for those persons whose feelings may have been therein offended. The objections of the Rev. S. S. Greatheed urged in another journal, have been met in their own field; I cannot hope to have convinced this opponent, but I trust to have shown him that I have not treated of historical matters without authority, and I am glad that the world has the benefit of his readings and opinions to compare with mine. Several private letters, from gentlemen with whom I was previously unacquainted, have apprised me of musical reforms in as many churches, more or less accordant with views set forth in the foregoing observations; and these flatter me that the thoughts of a Layman on an ecclesiastical subject have not been always found intrusive or from the purpose.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Rimbault and to Mr. W. Chappell, for much of the antiquarian matter these papers comprise. The opinions, such as they are, are my own; and I trust that, at least, they may show that I have thought earnestly upon the subject, and may so be entitled to pursue humbly my artist's calling in this branch of music.

#### THE BRISTOL MADRIGAL SOCIETY.

THE Annual Concert or, as it is modestly termed, "Ladies' Night," of this famous choir took place at the Victoria Rooms, Clifton, on the 16th ult., and was attended with a more than ordinary amount of success.

Before proceeding with the details of the concert, it may be interesting to the lovers of purely vocal music to learn somewhat respecting the history of this society, which, by careful and steady perseverance on the part of its members, has been placed in a position unattained, as yet, by any other choir in the kingdom.

Its formation dates thirty-one years back, when a lecture was given in Bristol on the subject of madrigal music, by Mr. Edward Taylor, the late professor of music at Gresham College. The musical illustrations of this lecture produced such an effect upon certain of the audience as to determine them upon forming a madrigal society in their own city. The services of the principal musicians in Bristol were brought into requisition, and Mr. J. D. Corfe, the cathedral organist, elected conductor; and such was the vigour with which this infant society was carried on, that only a few months had elapsed since its formation, when the first anniversary dinner was announced. This dinner, which took place in January of the following year, was in every way a great success, Sir John Rogers, Mr. Oliphant, and some other distinguished musical amateurs being present. On the subject of the music performed at this dinner tradition is eloquent; and there is no reason for doubting that soon after this its fame began rapidly to increase and spread in every direction.

At this time the society's dinners and meetings were restricted to individuals of the sterner sex, but it soon became apparent that something would have to be done towards admitting the ladies to a share in the enjoyment of these pleasant evenings, consequently a "Ladies' Night" was suggested, and inaugurated with what was thought considerable success, the audience (apart from the members of the society) numbering upwards of one hundred (!)

From that time to the present these concerts have been continued almost without intermission, and with a decidedly ever-increasing success.